

CERIS Workshop:

Research and Innovation against Illicit Drugs: From Foresight to Operational Impact

5-6 May 2026, BAO, Rue Felix Hap 11, 1040 Brussels

Concept and Agenda

Workshop Scope and Objectives:

Illicit drugs and drug trafficking remain among the most complex and persistent security challenges facing the European Union. They intersect public health, organised crime, border security and social cohesion, while continuously evolving through new substances, routes, technologies and criminal methods. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated, evidence-based and forward-looking approach that effectively links policy, operational needs and research and innovation.

This two-day CERIS workshop aims to bring together policymakers, practitioners, researchers, EU agencies, civil society and industry to examine how EU-funded security research and innovation can support a more effective and integrated response to drugs-related threats. The event will explore the full spectrum of the drugs phenomenon, including drug markets and foresight, organised crime, forensics, border and customs controls, and the societal dimension, with particular attention to youth.

The workshop will also reflect the evolving EU landscape, including the implementation of the EU Action Plan on drug trafficking and the reinforced role of the EU Drugs Agency (EUDA) in analysis, early warning, foresight and cooperation with the EU security research cycle. It will further highlight how research can support operational, policy priorities and coordination at EU level, including those addressed by Europol and national authorities. It will also consider how training and capacity-building activities at EU level can support the uptake of research results by law-enforcement authorities.

Building on previous CERIS events, the workshop combines policy discussions with concrete project demonstrations, allowing participants to exchange on practical results, usability and pathways from research to operational impact. By fostering dialogue across disciplines and communities, the workshop seeks to identify lessons learned, remaining gaps and priorities for future cooperation, and to strengthen the contribution of research and innovation to EU and Member State efforts against illicit drugs.

Agenda:

DAY 1: Understanding the Threat Landscape & Research Foundations

09:00 - 09:30 Registration & Welcome Coffee

09:30 - 10:15 Opening Session: Policy, Research and the EU Drugs Landscape

10:15 - 11:30 Panel 1: Drug Markets, Data and Foresight

11:30 - 12:00 Coffee Break

12:00 - 13:15 Panel 2: Drugs, Youth and Society

13:15 - 14:15 Lunch

14:15 - 15:45 Panel 3: Drugs-related Organised Crime

15:45 - 16:00 Coffee Break

16:00 - 17:15 Project Demos: Organised Crime & Markets

17:15 - 17:30 Day 1 Wrap-up

17:30 - 19:00 Cocktail Reception

DAY 2 – Tools, Forensics and Operational Uptake

09:00 - 09:15 Welcome Back & Day 2 Orientation

09:15 - 10:30 Panel 4: Drugs Forensics and Evidence

10:30 - 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 - 12:30 Panel 5: Borders, Customs and Supply Chains

12:30 - 13:30 Lunch

13:30 - 14:45 Project Demos: Forensics, Borders & Detection

14:45 - 15:45 Closing Panel: From Research to Impact

15:45 - 16:15 Conclusions & Way Forward

16:15 - 16:45 Farewell Coffee